



essential  
christian

# NEW DISCIPLE **HANDBOOK**

# Welcome to the Family

We are so excited for you.

You now have hundreds of thousands of new brothers and sisters. Some of us are a little weird; you will meet us at some point. We are a family on the move, sharing the adventures of this amazing life because we want all people to know the wonder of life with Jesus.

We've written this handbook because we wanted to make sure that you start your adventure with all you need for the first five weeks.

Imagine this pack as your field guide for the journey.

It's the greatest adventure.

Hard at times but worth it. Jesus wants to turn your world upside-down.

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."*

The writer of the letter 'Hebrews'  
Chapter 12, verses 1-3 (NIV)

# the adventure begins

# FITNESS

**Running the race  
needs fitness.**

Each day we need to prepare ourselves so that we can run the race without getting caught up in things weigh us down and hold us back. Question: What's going to hold you back? Bad attitudes? Addiction? Pride? To run well we need to prepare to throw off these things. Take a moment to do some preparation. Ask God to show you what might hold you back and to help free you from the things that are going to stop you running with passion.

## 3 things to help

# FANS

**Running the race  
needs fans.**

That Bible reading says there is a great cloud of witnesses cheering on the runner. That's what we are and others are to you. We are here to cheer you on, whooping and clapping as you run the race. Being part of a loving church community means being surrounded by fans to cheer us on. Joining a church is key to running the race with passion. Each week we meet to anchor ourselves in God's community and encourage one another.

# FOCUS

## Running the race needs focus.

Running the race needs fixing the focus of our eyes. A runner will tell you that running your best race means keeping your eyes on the finishing line rather than watching the other runners. It's as if Jesus stands at the finish line, so we run our best race by focusing on Him.

Focusing on him is what the church means by 'worship', a word used for thousands of years. Sometimes we worship by singing because words and music are beautiful tools that shape us. But in the end it's about focussing every part of our lives on him.

## 5 steps to start

Here are five first steps to help you start.

You could rush ahead and do a step a day  
**but we'd recommend one new step each week.**

**Don't put pressure on yourself.**

**Simply give time and enjoy growing your  
friendship with the God who loves you.**

## WEEK ONE

# wait

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Each day we get to stop and remember what's important. This 'six minute retreat' each day can help.

### THREE MINUTES: BIBLE

Take out the Bible – paper, app, no matter. In the menu look for **Matthew, Mark, Luke** or **John**. These are accounts of Jesus' life. Go bit by bit and allow it to sink in, asking yourself: What does this tell me about me? What does this tell me about God? Is there anything I should do in response to what I've read?

### TWO MINUTES: PRAY

God loves your voice. He loves to hear what you have to say. Laughing, crying, asking, complaining – whatever is going on, he wants you to speak with him. No need to sound 'religious'; simply say what you want.

### ONE MINUTE: LISTEN

Quality time with God is listening as well as talking. Take a moment to listen. Sometimes you might get a sense of what He is saying. Some people talk about a feeling; you might simply feel his presence. All of this is good stuff. Sometimes he's quiet like he's happy just to sit with you.

## WEEK TWO

# learn

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Church is a family on an adventure so we learn as we go. As you read the Bible ask God to speak to you, using these questions to help.



### WHAT JUMPS OUT AT ME?

What grabs your attention, challenges or inspires you?



### WHAT QUESTIONS DO I HAVE?

What do you wish you could ask the writer?  
What doesn't make sense? No question too silly.



### WHAT ABOUT GOD?

God made us to know him and know about him.  
What does this show about God?



### WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE?

We are made in his image but messed up by selfishness and fear. Does this show us who we were made to be?



### HOW CAN I SHOW THIS?

Jesus invites us to learn how to live life to the full.  
How can you show what you've learned today?

# WEEK THREE

## pray

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**Getting off the ground with prayer can be hard for many; you just don't know where to start, or if some words are better than others. Here's the key: be yourself.**

Take the pressure off and enjoy. Prayer is the greatest tool we have as followers of Jesus – to enjoy our connection with the Father who loves us; the God who says that nothing is impossible with Him. With a bit of practice, a daily rhythm of praying can become as easy as breathing.

Here are a few ways to get started:

### **WAYS TO PRAY: TRY**

Prayer is something active. It doesn't have to be done at the end of your bed, eyes closed like in the movies.

Try talking to God while walking. Draw your prayers as pictures of what you want to happen or who you're praying for. Jot down in a journal. Write on post-it notes and stick them on your wall.

Try setting an alarm to go off at points in the day to remind you to pray. Have fun playing around to see what works best for you.

Try picking one or two of these each day this week to pray for:

**Your family and friends**

**Your neighbourhood**

**Those you want to know about God**

**Your government**

**Those in need and other Christians world wide**

**Those you're finding it hard to love**

**Your church family**

**Your workplace or some other place you spend time.**

### **THE PRAYER JESUS TOLD US TO PRAY**

Simply use the Lord's Prayer, which is great for when praying feels hard. It's a passionate war-cry calling in God's kingdom.

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.**



# WEEK FOUR

## mentor

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A mentor is like a personal trainer. Getting others around us for wisdom and understanding is key to running the race well.

In a new work place you might be given someone who helps you settle into your new role and work. In many walks of life we have these mentors who help direct and support us in new things.

A mentor is a wise and trusted person who helps point us in the right direction and gives us a model for what we're learning.

### IN THE BIBLE

The Bible shows this plenty of times. In Exodus 18 Moses was mentored by his father-in-law, Jethro. In 1 Samuel 1-4 we see the way Eli and Samuel relate. Eli prepared Samuel for the tasks and responsibilities that were his after Eli's death.

In the gospels we see Jesus showing His disciples how to live, lead and work like him in daily life. Having fun, getting through difficulties and learning together. These friends are there to support us.

### GET A RUNNING MATE

As you take new steps to grow in faith, spending time with people who've been 'running the race' for longer is key to growing. A good running mate will help answer questions, model a life with Jesus and give you clear direction.

When we start in our relationship with God we can have pages of questions, worries and doubts. Having someone like this will give you space to ask questions, talk about your worries and pray with you.

### HOW TO FIND A RUNNING MATE

Finding the right person to work things through with you is key to growing. We encourage you to approach your local church leader or, if you have one, a friend who's already a Christian to help find the right person for you. Take this week to start these conversations to find the right person.

### PEOPLE I MIGHT SPEAK TO ABOUT THIS:

## WEEK FIVE

# pass it on

Jesus told the disciples to pass on what they learned from Him. So they did pass it on, all the way to you.

You have now heard about Jesus and started on your own journey which means you have been entrusted with this great treasure to share with others.

Telling people about Jesus can be as easy as telling people about a new product you have bought, or a meal you have eaten or a baby being born. It can be joyful and exciting.

You don't need to 'know enough'. If you know Jesus then you know enough because he is enough.

Be confident that what you have to share is brilliant and needs to be given away.

## 5 pointers TO PASSING IT ON

1

Your life is an important story to share. Simply telling people your story and what Jesus means to you is exciting, fantastic stuff. Many people simply haven't given it any thought so simply bringing it up is important. People who know you will see your faith and by walking them through your journey you are offering them a chance to join in too.

2

We earn the right to be heard by listening to others. Don't expect to be listened to if you don't listen to others. Become a good listener. The Bible says that Jesus became a 'friend of sinners', so you do the same. Become a good friend by offering a safe place for others to share their concerns, worries and whatever else life is throwing at them. Just be with them and love them.

3

People are looking for a cure. When we are sick, we go to the doctor with our symptoms but she or he sees to the cause of those symptoms and offers a cure. We are all broken and Jesus comes to heal our brokenness. We see loneliness, suffering, distrust, stress. But the cause is our sin – disconnection from God. Jesus is the cure. Jesus came to die not for our symptoms but to deal with our sin – reconnecting us to God.

Without knowing the cause, we do experience the symptoms of sin. We can help people see the cause (sin), and take them to the ultimate cure (Jesus).



4

Keep it simple and clear. We don't need to complicate things. Simply tell people the good news is Jesus loves them and wants them to be free from the symptoms of their sin as well as the sin itself. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (NIV)

5

Pray. Always pray for those you want to share your news with, ask God to help them find what you have found. Praying makes the conversation and relationship no longer just about you but also about God.

# Cheering you on

We will be praying for you over the coming weeks, months and years. We are all in this together and want to help each other on the journey. We have all been at the start and hope this short guide to starting your race will help you.

Get others praying for you in the weeks to come and know that mistakes are fine. It's not about never messing up: being part of Jesus' family doesn't mean we never mess up or get anything wrong. It does mean he always wants to pick us up and carry on anyway.

The decision you have made to follow Jesus is daring and brave. But in no way it is as brave as the love God has for you. He made you and risked losing you, he then came for you and gave his life for you. God risked everything for you. Now you get to show him your love, and show the world his love too.

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CONTENT IN THIS BOOKLET IS BASED UPON  
***MAKING DISCIPLES*** BY CRIS ROGERS